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RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 4915
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 4415
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 1640
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2032
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 2010
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 004628

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DEPT FOR AF/E AND PRM
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2026
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KISL](#) [PREF](#) [KE](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: KENYAN SECURITY MINISTER MICHUKI DEEPLY CONCERNED
OVER ISLAMIC COURTS

REF: A. NAIROBI 4334

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 4322

Classified By: Political Counselor Larry Andre for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Kenya's Minister of National Security is seized with Somalia and the possible implications of a complete takeover of that country by the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC). He expressed deep concern over the likely implications of this scenario, regionally and in Kenya, and urged U.S. and international action to prevent it, including immediate lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia. He made numerous requests for additional assistance for counter-terrorism. END SUMMARY.

Somalia is a Font of Extremism...

[1](#)2. (C) In the Ambassador's first call on Minister of Provincial Administration and National Security John Michuki on October 17, the Minister said the issues of security, terrorism, and regional stability are all inter-linked for Kenya, and are related to porous borders. The U.S. and Kenya share Somalia concerns on two fronts, he said. The first is the immediate danger of a spread of extremism to Kenyan Muslims, particularly in Northeastern and Coast Provinces, but also in Nairobi. He mentioned recent demonstrations by Muslims who had presented him a memo, claiming basically, Michuki said, that "all anti-terrorism actions" of the GOK have been against Muslims. Michuki said he didn't see why they should think this "unless they have guilty consciences," as the government "hasn't even interfered with preaching in the mosques--fiery as it is." Extremism in the region will only increase if Somalia is "allowed to fall" into extremism, he said.

...and Irredentism

[1](#)3. (C) Secondly, Michuki said, some of those in leadership in the CIC were part of former Somali president Siad Barre's regime, and share that regime's territorial ambitions. Many Somalis would like to extend their borders as far as Garissa (a town in Kenya's ethnically Somali Northeastern Province),

he said. A few would like to extend them as far as Nanyuki, he added. (Note: While the Minister was exaggerating, Nanyuki, on the northwest side of Mt. Kenya, could be taken as the most extensive point of a line drawn around ethnic Somalis and related Cushitic ethnic groups in Kenya. End note.)

...and the Dangers are Growing

¶4. (C) Kenya was hoping that by now the Security Council would have both removed the arms embargo on Somalia and also authorized IGAD peacekeepers. The more we delay, the more problems we will have," Michuki said. He has no hopes for the next round of Khartoum talks, as the Arab League will emphasize the "religious connection" with the Courts. The "small states of the Middle East" are supporting and encouraging the extremists in Somalia, while Eritrea is exploiting the situation. The U.S. and Kenya need to work together to contain these dangers, he said.

Watching the Border, Sowing Some Fear

¶5. (C) Kenya is watching its border with Somalia and the coast, Michuki went on. He raised the concern that it is easy for young men to go across to Somalia for indoctrination, and then return quietly to Kenya to work to expand extremist influence. The border needs to be reinforced militarily, he said, not necessarily for the purpose of moving into Somalia, but at least to "put the fear of God" into the CIC leadership, to show them Kenya will resist Somali expansion.

Help Us (Much More) in the CT Fight

¶6. (C) Kenya appreciates the U.S. gift of patrol boats to the Kenya Navy, Michuki said, but needs more. He suggested two additional patrol boats for each of the Coast districts of Lamu, Malindi, Kilifi, and Kwale, noting that Kenya faces a serious problem of drug smuggling, which finances terrorism. Kenya also faces illegal fishing by deep-sea trawlers in Kenyan waters, he added. Warming to the topic, he asked for forensic equipment (NFI), so that cases against terrorists will be more evidence-based and more likely to lead to convictions. Surveillance equipment would also be useful--including helicopters. These helicopters should be able to carry troops, so they can "land and intervene" when they see suspicious movements.

Refugees, Or Infiltrators?

¶7. (C) The Minister said that recently (NFI) 85 persons claiming to be refugees were turned back at Mandera (at the northern end of the Kenya-Somalia border). Kenyan authorities know the area across from Mandera is calm, so how could they be refugees, he asked rhetorically. More such attempts will be made along the 800 km. border. Refugee claimants could easily hide arms in the bush on the Somali side of the border, he said. Pulling a note from his pocket, he stated that there are 147,000 refugees at Dadaab camp "as of yesterday." 34,000 of these arrived this year, of whom 9,000 arrived since June, he said. These new arrivals "are not running from torture or killings, but from closed-down cinemas and miraa (qaat) markets," he claimed. The newcomers need to be moved far from the border, he went on (ref B), so they are out of contact with Somalia. The Minister said he is going to Dadaab next week, and will go to Kakuma soon after. The Ambassador, acknowledging Michuki's concerns, said he trusts Kenya will continue to meet its obligations under international law.

About that Arms Embargo, and Somaliland

¶18. (C) The Ambassador assured the Minister that the U.S. has similar concerns about Somalia. "It's not in the interest of the region to go Islamic," the Minister emphasized. He added (presumably prompted by a Somaliland question from the Ambassador) that any secession attempt in the region should be "fought tooth and nail." All over the region, including in Kenya, there are ethnic groups "quietly nursing ideas" of secession, he said. (NOTE: Michuki's Cabinet colleague, FM Tuju, is on record favoring eventual recognition of Somaliland. END NOTE.)

Say, Help Us Fight Extremism with Land

¶19. (C) The Minister's final plea was for U.S. aid in settling a "social issue" on the Coast, as a way of fighting extremism. The GOK wants to take back land from absentee landlords, and also buy land from legitimate owners to settle those on the coast who feel dispossessed (ref A). Kenya's fundamental policy is that no property is to be used without recognition that it has an owner, the Minister said. However, the sense of dispossession is a serious problem the government is looking to solve, and perhaps the U.S. can help, he concluded.

Embassy Airspace

¶10. (C) In his introductory remarks, the Ambassador had mentioned our concerns over the lack of an airspace restriction over the Embassy, and the need for permission for Kenyan air traffic controllers to contact the Embassy

directly in case a plane does begin to head towards the Embassy, rather than a message delivered through government channels. The Ambassador noted our concern that time would be extremely short in a terrorist attack. He raised the issue again at the meeting's end, and the Minister promised to look into the issue and respond. He directed an MFA official in the meeting to follow up with the Minister of Transportation.

COMMENT

¶11. (C) The Minister's deep concern over the likely implications of an Islamist victory in Somalia seems widely shared among educated non-Muslim Kenyans. Michuki's democratic credentials are weak -- he is an old-school politician with autocratic tendencies. He is widely acknowledged to be the instigator of the ill-fated masked police raid on a major daily newspaper in April. That said, Michuki is a serious interlocutor on counter-terrorism and other security issues, and we need to continue to engage with him. END COMMENT.
RANNEBERGER